

## *2 Peter 3:1-7    God Will Judge    8/6/17*

*This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,<sup>2</sup> that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, <sup>3</sup> knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. <sup>4</sup> They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” <sup>5</sup> For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, <sup>6</sup> and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. <sup>7</sup> But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.*

*(Pastor prays)*

In some ways, this is a terrifying passage. I mean, it ends in verse 7 with the words *the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly*. That is a terrifying thought, that there is a day coming when the Heavens and the Earth will burn and those not in Christ will be assigned to Hell where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. That is not a positive and uplifting thing on this pleasant Sunday morning. It's terrifying.

In another sense, this passage is encouraging and uplifting for those who are in Christ. We have a tangible, see-able truth that strengthens us in a world that has rejected the God of the Bible. Even here in Charlotte, where almost 60 people have already been murdered this year, in a city where sex trafficking is commonplace, abuse goes unseen and little babies are not even safe in a mother's womb. That's the world we live in.

Verse 3 is the world we live in.

Scoffers come scoffing and if you aren't careful, Fox News and Facebook can give you a picture of a world without God. Part of my job today is to tell you He is here and He is not silent. So, struggling Christian mom or heartbroken Christian dad or depressed and sad believer, your redeemer lives and He lives to bring honor to God's name and to work in God's people.

Peter writes with the simple purpose of encouraging God's people to stay in the fight. "For this light momentary affliction cannot compare with the eternal weight of Glory that awaits us."

## **God is in Control and He Loves His People**

### **It is the Love of God that Secures Us**

Let me show you where I get that. Right there in verse 1, Peter picks up where he left off in Chapter 2. He says this is his second letter, hence, the name 2 Peter. Read the verse and see the word "beloved." *This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved.* Beloved. Now if we are not careful, we can just run by that word and not notice the grace and depth of it. Beloved. In Greek, *agapitós*. It certainly has to do with Peter's love for them but, more accurately, that word has to do with God's love for them. For you. If you are in Christ, you are a recipient of God's saving, specific, particular, redeeming love.

Stand there and think about that a minute. I don't mean the general love of God that He has for His creation. God does love everyone, but I'm talking about the soul-saving, life-converting, covenant-keeping love God had for His people in Christ.

In fact, it's worth us looking at that word *agapitós* in the New Testament. It's the same word used at two remarkable points in the earthly ministry of Jesus. It happened at His baptism and again at the transfiguration. When Jesus came up out of the water, Matthew tells us that God spoke, in Matthew 3:17, *and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."*

Then again at the transfiguration, Mathews tells us in Chapter 17, verse 5, *He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."*

Now think with me. Beloved. That's what God the Father said about God the Son, and now Peter is saying that about we who are in Christ. Your security as a believer, your need for affection, your feelings of loneliness and heartache, your bitterness or hatred,

your shameful sin that makes you feel like God really can't love you, all of that is swallowed up at the cross of Jesus.

To be in Christ is to be loved like Christ. When you are in Christ, God loves you because he loves Christ and those who are in Him. As a Christian, one of the greatest freedoms you will have is when you realize the infinite love of God the Father to those who are in God the Son. Beloved. *Agapitós*. It's a beautiful word. It's the love of God that secures us.

### **It's the Word of God that Shapes Us**

To see this, you have to take verses 1 and 2 together and listen to what Peter wants to do in his people and by extension, in us. Verse 1, *I am stirring up your sincere mind*. The Old Testament word for "stir up" is a word used in the New Testament in several different ways. I'll give you two.

In John 6, the disciples were on a boat on the Sea of Galilee. A strong wind came and "stirred up" the sea. Or in Mark 4, the disciples were in a boat with Jesus and a storm came. They got afraid, Jesus was sleeping, so they went and "stirred" him. Bring those usages here. Peter is saying "I want to wake you up," "I want to shake you into reality."

Surely you know a person you love and you see her life going off the rails and you want to shake her and say, "What are you doing? Can't you see you're ruining your life?" And it's almost always with someone who *knows* better.

That's what the text seems to imply. *I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder* – that you should remember. Those two words, "reminder" and "remember," tell us that *information* isn't the issue. The issue is the *love of sin*. It's an addiction that wraps like a boa constrictor and squeezes out life.

But there's an antidote. He gives it to us in verse 2: *that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles*. That's referring to the Old Testament. The New Testament is centered on the Lord and Savior. The Old Testament is the promise made. The New Testament

is the promise kept. The Old Testament points forward to Christ. The New Testament points back to Christ so that we have Biblical thinking.

Believers need to be reminded of the truth they already know. And when the truth grips you, when you are possessed by the Gospel and the truth of the Bible, when you are filled by the Holy Spirit and fed by the word of God, then you are energized to live your life for the Glory of God.

It's the love of God that secures us. Beloved. John 3:16, *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

It's the word of God that shapes us. The Word does the work. We read the word, pray the word, sing the word and believe the word. There's something else here that demands our attention. It's the mockers or scoffers. Love secures. The Word shapes.

### **It's the Judgement of God That Sobers Us**

Peter introduces the judgment in verse 3 by bringing up the scoffers or mockers, or those who not only don't believe, but think you are an imbecile for believing what the Bible says. Scoffing or mocking is a powerful too. There are four things in particular that Peter mentions that are scoffed at.

1. They question the **eminent return of Christ**. You might ask, Is that a big deal? But to be a Christian is to believe in the Second Coming of Christ. There are several passages that affirm that. Acts 1, John 14, 1 Thessalonians 4-5.
2. They question **God's direct intervention** like answering prayer or healing or protecting. They don't believe in providence. Providence – God working in the details of our lives.
3. They reject **general revelation**. They reject that a Holy God created all we see and governs it.
4. They reject **God's divine judgment against the ungodly**. They don't believe He will actually punish people who are not Christians. Peter refers them all the way back to Genesis and the worldwide flood.

This is not to say they don't believe in a god, they just don't believe in the God of the Bible. And the reason for unbelief is not that these are bad people. The reason people don't believe is tucked away in verse 3.

Let's go back and read it. *knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.* Sin is a delicious poisonous drug that hooks you and masters you and changes the very way you think and live. And so, people reject the goodness and holiness of God. They ignore their need for a savior because they really don't think they are bad. And what a terrifying, sad day it will be when working dads and faithful wives who never came to Christ hear the words "depart from me, I never knew you."

People reject the God of the Bible because they desire to live in a universe without moral accountability or absolutes. Listen to the words of Jesus in Matthew 25: *"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

*<sup>41</sup> "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*

God will judge each of us and His judgment won't be based on whether you did more good than bad. The judgment will be whether you are in Christ or not...Whether you are beloved as in verse 1 or ungodly as in verse 7.

This passage, like every other passage in the Bible, teaches us 4 things:

**God is loving and holy.**

**Man was made in the image of God but sin separates us from him.**

**Jesus Christ, all God and all man, came once and lived perfectly, died sacrificially and was raised up victoriously and he reigns eternally.**

With this information, there is only one right thing to do. **The Bible says that people everywhere must repent, turn from their old ways and believe.**

Trust that Jesus died for you. And if you do that, you will be Beloved.

*(Pastor prays)*